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September 18, 2012

Honorable Lisa Lyons  
Michigan House Education Committee Chair  
1190 House Office Building  
Lansing, MI 48909

**In Support: SB 620 -Senator Robertson Sponsor**

Dear Representative Lyons:

As State Director of CA Democrats for Education Reform and as the author of our nation's first Parent Trigger law, I am writing to wholeheartedly support SB 620. As you know California was the first state to adopt a parent trigger which allows a majority of parents in a failing school to vote on a method to restructure the school.

I believe the time has come for all to understand that it is parents who are the architects of their children's future and we must empower them with the tools required to enact whatever changes are necessary to achieve access to a quality education. Parents have felt frustrated and abandoned for too long because those who run chronically under-performing schools — quite simply did not sense the need of urgency to turn these schools around.

I wrote this Parent Trigger bill, turned into law, frankly, to empower parents with rights AND responsibilities to do what too many school administrators and bureaucrats in charge of the education system were not doing — provide options for their children to get the best education possible.

Having your Parent Trigger law is powerful and imaginative. What other law can you think of that gives parents real rights? In California, we have seen that parents are, unequivocally, the one sector of the education arena where they don't have a special interest. Their main objective is to fight for an education for their kids.

At a time when we are witnessing the lengths that parents will go to, including incarceration, to obtain a quality education for their children, you must enact this bill into law and provide choices and opportunities for parents.

Please do the right thing and dispel those other comments we hear often such as 'Oh, the parents don't care.' 'If only the parents care.' 'Make them responsible.' Yes, make them responsible, but give them the rights to match the responsibility. This is a fundamental equation. And parents will utilize those rights.

I have been a life-long Democrat who has fought for civil rights and this *is* a civil rights issue. However, I want to be clear that demanding children receive the best education possible is not a Democratic or Republican issue. This should be a cooperative, bi-partisan effort. Today you have an opportunity to collaborate and coalesce with those who believe a quality education is the most important right we can provide our nation's children, regardless of political affiliation.

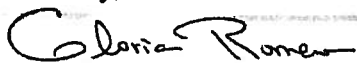
Do not be influenced by powerful special interests that fear that they may lose some control of their educational system when parents begin to have a greater voice in the system. I think that's a good thing and I don't think we should be afraid of that.

Parents and taxpayers are — sick and tired — of waiting and waiting and waiting for the school system, a failing school, to turn around. Make parents responsible for their child getting a quality education.

As elected legislators, you have the honor and privilege of being in public service. You have an opportunity to put the well-being of children first and recognize the time has come to make a change. Look at your state schools' outcome data and ask yourselves 'Is this the best educational system we can provide our children?'

Please have the courage and the backbone to move this law forward and to help grow a national movement that gives parents real rights while we understand the responsibilities that must accompany those rights.

Sincerely,



Senator Gloria Romero (Ret.)  
State Director  
Democrats for Education Reform